must have got to loathe those rattling ovens, the desert battle-wagons!

None of us felt like walking the ten miles to Ral-al-Khaimah. We decided to invite the Khan Sahib to give us his advice. He at least knew the locality; but to our surprise he had disappeared. We assumed he had designs of his own, and waited patiently in the shade of an old palm tree until he should return. On our left the creek flowed lazily as the tide came in, while to our right lay open fields of clover, divided by plantations of thriving date palms, each about a quarter of an acre in extent, and surrounded by flint-and-mortar walls three feet high. The trees are carefully tended from the first planting, and the plantations contain as many as twenty to thirty deep wells each, from which the water is hand-drawn by means of buckets attached to long ropes.

On some plantations there is a simple, but effective, irrigation system; this consists of channels running at right angles, like the lines on a crossword puzzle. The young plants are placed in the ground between these channels, and are surrounded by low mud walls. This enables the water to collect around the roots in a saucer-shaped depression. The roots penetrate the soil for five or six feet in their search for water, and trees in their prime (about twenty years old) reach a height of thirty feet or more. The bark is composed of the stem-base of the leaves or fronds, which die off each summer. The fruit begins to form in July and the dates are ready for picking in September. They are then packed tightly in boxes and taken by camel or dhow to the merchants for export. Those intended for local consumption are either dried, or else pickled in their own syrup, to which is sometimes added wild honey and ginger, making a delicious concoction.

Herds of cattle were grazing in the fields, watched by young Arab boys; they sang ditties to each other or told stories, a favourite desert pastime. The cattle are very small and anæmic compared with European stock, the largest bull being no larger than a young English heifer. Like the Indian cattle, from which no doubt they are descended, they are hump-backed and have a pathetic *moo-oo* which resembles the cry of a nursery toy cow. The Arab farmers tie the forefeet of their cattle together to prevent them from straying, and their progress when being driven reminded me of a two-legged race.

We had brought a .303 service rifle with us. It had originally belonged to one of our Askhari guards, but he had not looked after

[Ten miles from Ras-al-Khaimah -- Analyst]